

April 21, 2016

PC Members Present: Jean Vissering (Chair), Julie Potter, Scott Hess, Ray Stout, Jack Pauly

Others Present: Kristi Flynn (Recording Clerk), John Adams, Louise Frazier, Ross Hazel, Ginny Burley

Call to order: 7:00pm

Changes to Agenda – None

Public Comment – None

East Montpelier Village Master Plan: Neighborhood Development Areas, Discussion with John Adams, VT Department of Housing & Community Development

Introductions were conducted by the Chair. Mr. Adams is a land use planner by trade and on the PC in Montpelier. Mr. Adams gave a presentation on the Neighborhood Development Area program. The state specifies 5 designations: Village Center (121 in the state), Downtowns (24), New Town Center (2), Neighborhood Development Area (6) and Growth Center (6). EM already has the Village Center Designation that has tax benefits to those living there. A Neighborhood Development Area (NDA) is an area within 10-15 minutes walking distance; it incentivizes housing and can reduce commuting time.

There are 6 NDAs in the state, all in Chittenden County. The NDAs can go beyond the 1/2 mile boundary and can be project-based. Some benefits of an NDA:

- Act 250 threshold goes up (i.e., EM goes from 10 units to 25 units before Act 250 kicks in)
 - Some housing must be affordable
 - Also applies to mixed-use
- Act 250 fees are reduced by up to 50%
- Character of the area decisions can't be appealed
- Land gains taxes are reduced
- Density requirements are increased with a community wastewater system – minimum of 4 units per acre in the regulations
 - Look at what Westford is doing
- Building design standards
 - Pedestrian-oriented
 - Can you build a walkable neighborhood?
 - Front entrance towards the street
 - Garage setbacks
- Transportation network
 - Street connections/sidewalks
 - Reduce parking requirements – on-street parking is more efficient
- Protection of natural resources – nothing can be built in the floodplain

Steps moving forward

- Have Mr. Adams attend a town meeting (today's meeting counts)
- Have Mr. Adams review the current regulations
- Mr. Adams will send a link to a Planning Manual
 - Module 1 – The Municipal Plan
 - Module 2 – State Designation Program
- Strong Communities Quarterly Newsletter – Mr. Adams will send a link to sign up

Application

- Can apply for a small area or the whole village
- Can be by a municipality or a developer

Is there a housing shortage in Washington County?

- Yes, but not as pronounced as in Chittenden County
- There is a need for senior housing here

Beware of unintended consequences

- Your community may not be in agreement with the changes and not ready for more development

East Montpelier Village Master Plan: Review of Draft Business Survey

The PC reviewed the draft of the survey created by Ms. Potter. She noted that there are more than 20 and less than 50 businesses in the village area. It was suggested to add to question #7 a question about how the existing infrastructure meets the business needs. The PC suggested adding what types of businesses are desired to question #8. Ms. Potter will have a revised draft for the next meeting.

Discussion on Healthy Communities with New Directions Coalition, Ginny Burley

Ms. Burley shared with the PC the history of the New Directions Coalition. In the late 90's, two high school boys died in a crash driving home from a party. The Coalition secured funding for underage drinking programs and prevention. Tobacco (TV ads, store placement of cigarettes) is a success story, as many fewer people and kids smoke today. The Coalition would like to use policy work to change habits. Ms. Burley would like to get this issue in the conversation, particularly when it comes to the town updating the Town Plan. She handed out a Primer of Planning for Prevention created by Lamoille County and the Coalition can help with some sample language for the Plan.

Update on East Montpelier Old LaPerle Farm Property Committee

Mr. Stout noted that the committee has not officially met since the last PC meeting, but is looking at options for the 46 acres. The next steps are testing the land for septic, looking for alternative solutions, and looking for an expert to assist them. The Chair of the SB has asked the SB for funding for this testing. The next meeting in May will be a walk around the property.

Review Draft Revisions to Planning Commission's Rules of Procedure

The PC agreed to table this discussion to the next meeting when more PC members are present.

Review Minutes

April 7, 2016

Motion: I move to approve the minutes as amended. Made: Mr. Hess, second: Ms. Potter

Vote on Motion: Passed 5-0

ZA Report

7 new permits since last meeting

DRB Report

- Next meeting is May 3 for 3 hearings
 - Onne/Malachowski
 - Town Park N Ride
 - Orchard Valley School

Other Business

- Planning to Protect Drinking Water – 4/29 from 9am-noon in Morristown

Motion to Adjourn. Made: Mr. Stout, second: Mr. Pauly. Passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 8:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Kristi Flynn, Recording Clerk